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Elgin Association of Commerce

Opportunity, Beauty: Elgin. (1929)

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

BEAUTY
ELGIN

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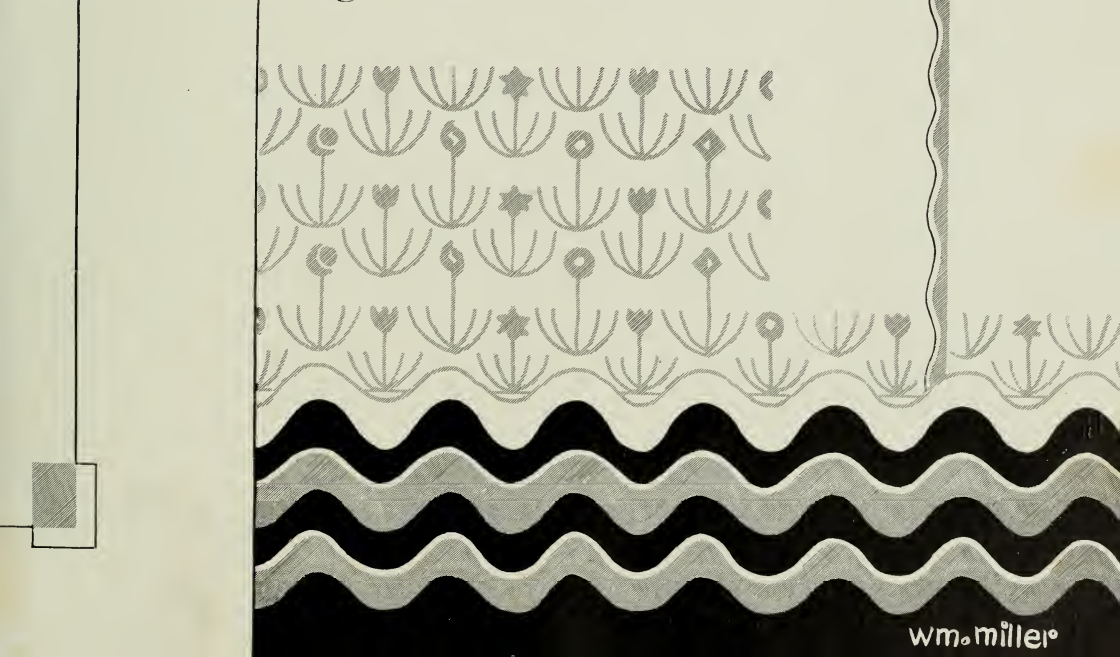
Elgin ▲ ▲ Foreword

Life . . . is filled with joys and sorrows . . . comforts and hardships . . . wealth and poverty . . . beauty and ugliness . . . activity and inertia . . . kindness and cruelty . . . hope and despair . . . paychecks and bills . . . flat tires and speedplanes . . . burnt breakfast bacon and delicious Sunday dinners . . . crying babies and proud mothers and fathers . . . BUT . . . there's one garden spot in this world of reality where the pleasant things of life are constantly shunting the distasteful things into the background . . . one place where there's always sunshine and friendship in life no matter how dark the clouds of trouble . . . YES, . . . real people really live in

ELGIN, ILLINOIS

▲ ▲ the Elgin ▲ ▲
association of commerce
elgin ▲ ▲ ▲ illinois



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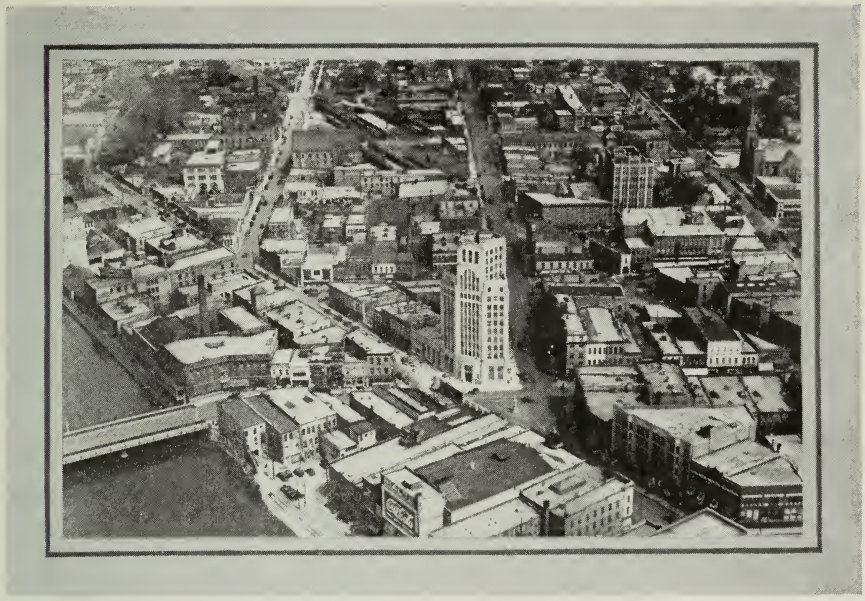

© Dick Peck

The Romance of the City of Elgin

Have you ever longed to find romance and adventure in . . . . just living?

Have you ever closed your eyes and found yourself drearily day dreaming in your chair . . . thinking . . . hoping . . . wondering if somewhere in this great country of ours there was a place where you could find peace . . . happiness . . . contentment . . . where you could really live for the joy of living . . . yet not be out of touch with a humming center of activity where romance is found in iron . . . and steel . . . and skyscrapers?

Then . . . let us tell you the story of the city of your dreams . . . nestled in the quiet of a river valley . . . thirty-seven miles from the heart of America's second greatest metropolis . . . a city of beautiful homes, fine streets, lovely parks, stately churches . . . a city of charm and beauty . . . filled with true happiness . . . a city of friendly people . . . beckoning the home seeker not alone as a place to live but as a "place for ideal living" . . . ELGIN, ILLINOIS.

If we delve into history we find that Elgin was founded nearly a hun-

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dred years ago when a courageous band of Western settlers came upon a spot in the winding Fox River Valley whose natural beauty impressed them as a site for a home settlement which could grow into a thriving, progressive city.

No towering mountain peaks . . . no diamond studded lakes . . . no scenic wonders . . . just a placid river stream flowing through a fertile valley surrounded by green forests and rolling hills. . . . To them the site spelled 'opportunity' just as ELGIN today spells opportunity for success and happiness . . . at work and at home.

Ten decades have passed since the pioneers organized their little hamlet and named it after a Scotch hymn

A picturesque view of the beautiful Fox River at Elgin.

One of many model farms located at the edge of Elgin.

bearing the title "ELGIN." The village has grown to a thriving city of over 35,000 people. Its industries . . . its homes . . . . and its people reflect the progress of a century. An hour's ride to the East is Chicago . . . giant dynamo of the Middle West harboring three and a half million people.

The People

The early characteristics of ELGIN'S population have been maintained. The years have not changed the type of people making up its citizenry . . . and . . . after all . . . your neighbors, your associates, the friendly ones with whom you come in contact every hour of the day are the greatest asset . . . the real attraction in any city. Today, over eighty percent of ELGIN'S residents are native white . . . the balance are whites of foreign birth . . . most of whom, of course, are fully naturalized American citizens. Intelligent, active, civic-minded people . . . well educated persons whose greatest interest lies in being neighborly . . . friendly to one another . . . those are the chief characteristics of the residents of ELGIN.

Route 22
A typical concrete road leading into the City of Elgin

The City Government

Government "by the people" has a real meaning in the city of ELGIN. The authoritative power is vested in a mayor and four commissioners who compose the executive commission which has full executive and legislative powers usually possessed by the political officers elected under the regular aldermanic form of government. Political rivalry has been discarded in ELGIN as detrimental to the best welfare of the city. Ineffi-

Elgin's ultra-modern High School.

The Laura Davidson Sears Academy of Fine Arts.

ciency, graft, corruption and the usual vicissitudes of government are unknown. The mayor and commissioners are aware of their complete responsibility to the people. To each is entrusted the supervision of certain departments of government and the responsibility for their proper functioning rests solely with the executive commissioner.

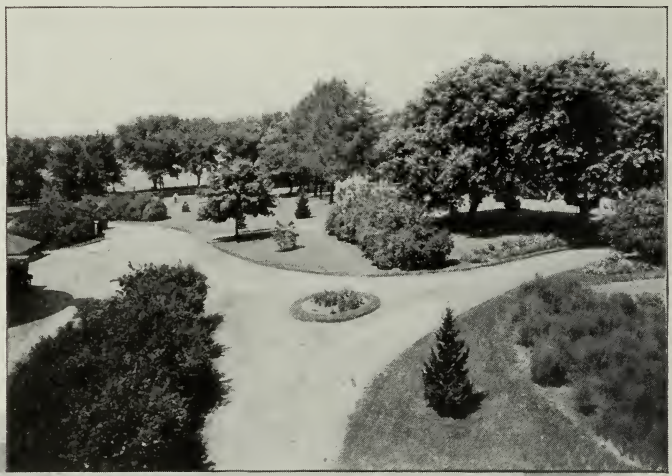
The Schools and Churches

The educational facilities found in the city of ELGIN are seldom equalled in cities of similar population. A fully equipped high school . . . modern in every respect . . . rated Class A by educational organizations and eleven grade school buildings comprise the public educational facilities in the city. All of these schools are directed by trained educators and offer courses of instruction for every individual need. Ample facilities for expansion have been provided. The children of ELGIN'S families are never crowded into classrooms . . . . temporary barracks are never used. In addition to the public institutions ELGIN has three parochial schools, and a well equipped business college

A view showing one of the many beautiful churches located in Elgin.

offering courses in day and evening instruction, Elgin Academy, one of the oldest institutions of learning in the state, heavily endowed, and a school of such high rating that its students are accepted at Annapolis and West Point without further scholastic examination. Also a home and farm school for boys is just outside the city limits, and a fraternal school for children is located three miles north of the city.

The churches of ELGIN, having a membership of over half the population in the city are among the most beautiful religious edifices in the country. Their membership com-



Elgin is very proud of its beautiful Public Parks.

Two views taken in Wing Park, Elgin.

prises men and women of all creeds and denominations who are impelled by their faith to devote much time and energy to the expounding of the Christian religion. The city churches reflect varied types of architecture yet invariably each structure has been so designed and created as to add to the impressive beauty of the city. Church attendance in ELGIN is almost as much a matter of civic pride as the ballot box.

The Recreational Opportunities

Beautiful parks covering many acres of rolling wooded ground and wide expanses of lawn are found right in the heart of ELGIN. The

Elgin's Municipal Bathing Pool.

One of the Public Golf Courses in Elgin.

largest has a nine hole golf course, tennis courts, hockey courses, baseball fields and horseshoe courts and covers over one hundred and twenty acres of ground. Another contains a museum and zoological garden and two small lakes which afford excellent winter sport activities. A bandstand for public musical concerts . . . a park having hundreds of natural springs and filled with small streams and wooded terrain . . . all of these are found in this dream city.

Several country clubs having eighteen hole golf courses and other recreational facilities are available.

View showing the lounge room in Elgin's B. P. O. E. Club.

Lounge room in Elgin's Union League Club.

Theatres, swimming pools, a large public library, canoeing, boating, fishing, hunting, all of these are recreational activities which the people of ELGIN are constantly enjoying. Football, basketball, and baseball are played by the high school and Elgin Academy students and a widespread interest is maintained in these sports.

Elgin also has an active Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., each occupying its own building. These organizations are renowned for their excellent recreational facilities and the good fellowship prevailing among the members is of the highest. The Y. M. C. A., whose membership totals over 1200, has an excellent summer camp located on Lake Beulah, Wisconsin, which is considered one of the finest equipped and most beautiful Y. camps in the country.

How People Live

Nearly eighty-five percent of the people in ELGIN own their own homes. This fact alone attests to the prestige this fine city has obtained

Elgin's Masonic Temple.

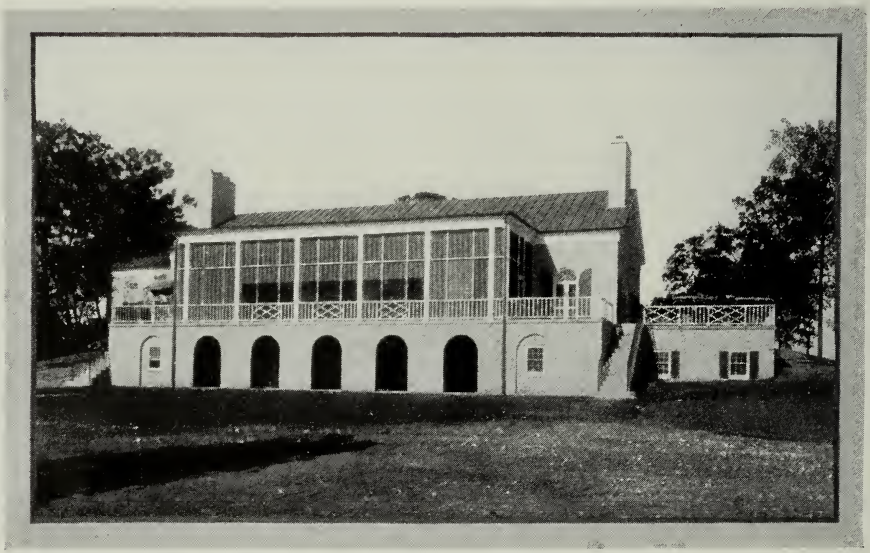
as a "CITY OF HOMES." One of the basic reasons for such universal home ownership in ELGIN has been the development of the Building & Loan Associations which offer many financial inducements to the prospective home owner. Loans are always available for the financing of homes and the careful business zeal which the Building and Loan Associations have followed for many years has greatly contributed to the substantial growth of the city.

ELGIN residents are proud of their homes. They have spent years of painstaking care in making their homes places of beauty. Colorful gardens . . . expansive lawns . . . stately trees . . . all help to give ELGIN'S homes an atmosphere of character and distinction. There are no slums in ELGIN . . . living costs are lower than in corresponding cities in the middle west . . . ELGIN'S streets are well paved . . . well lighted . . . constantly kept in good repair.

When People Travel

When ELGINITES travel they have one thought uppermost in their minds . . . to travel rapidly . . . perform their business and return to ELGIN. Consequently ease of transportation is one of the factors

View showing Elgin's Country Club House.



which has made ELGIN a great residential center. Three finely equipped railroads, two of them steam and one electric, serve as common carriers for ELGIN'S people. Four main highways lead into Chicago. As many more converge in ELGIN and lead out to all sections of the state.

An interurban service connects ELGIN with other Fox River Valley cities as well as Chicago. Bus lines are operating on all of the main highways leading in and out of the city. The railroads and highways also afford excellent express and freight service to all sections of the country.

View showing a typical Elgin residence.

Home gardens such as this are numerous in Elgin.

What People Do

There are upwards of sixty industries in ELGIN. Of these, the largest are the watch and watch case manufacturing concerns which employ several thousand people. Many of ELGIN'S products have received

Elgin's Banks are progressive. The new quarters of the Home Trust and Savings Bank, and Home National Bank.

The famous Elgin Observatory of the Elgin National Watch Company where time is recorded.

national and even world wide fame. The very name has come to mean the hallmark of quality so that today even the mention of the word ELGIN immediately arrests the listener's attention for that name in itself has a distinct advertising value. Wages are comparable in Elgin to other cities in the middle west. There are always splendid opportunities for skilled artisans and energetic apprentices. The variety of industry in ELGIN is so general that it is impossible to mention specific industrial possibilities.

Where People Shop

Elgin is a city of exceptionally fine stores. They are well equipped, modern in every detail and carry merchandise identical to that found in much larger metropolitan cities. The salespeople in these stores are courteous and attentive . . . ever willing to serve their patrons to the best of their ability. Many of Elgin's stores enjoy the patronage of people in neighboring cities, such as Chicago, Rockford, Aurora and Joliet. Shopping in Elgin is as much a real joy as living in Elgin.

Elgin's Hospital facilities are very modern and adequate.

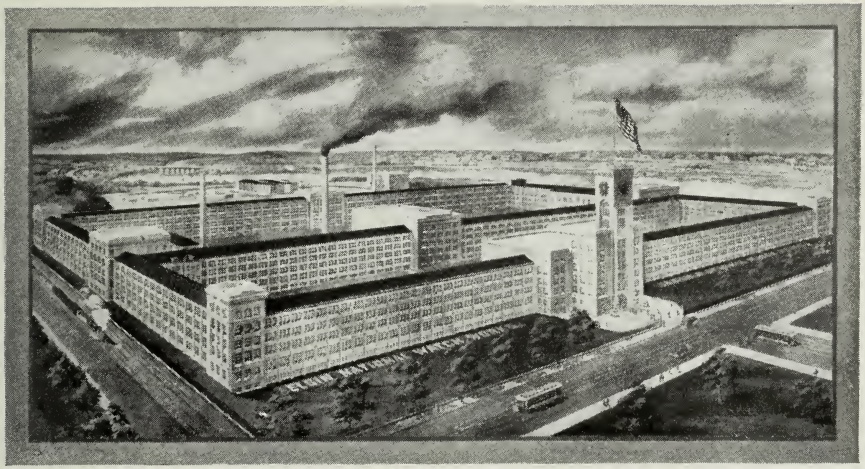
Sherman Hospital

And Now

We could go on forever telling you of the many attractions found in this unique Fox River Valley city. We could tell you of its charitable and welfare work . . . of its health and sanitation . . . of the functioning

Airplane view of Elgin State Hospital.

St. Joseph's Hospital.



View showing the tremendous plant of the internationally famous Elgin National Watch Company.

of its city departments . . . of its newspapers . . . its professional organizations . . . its clubs . . . its industrial opportunities . . . its public utilities . . . but we want you to appreciate the real charm and beauty of this dream city, for we know you will take those attributes which are common to all communities for granted.

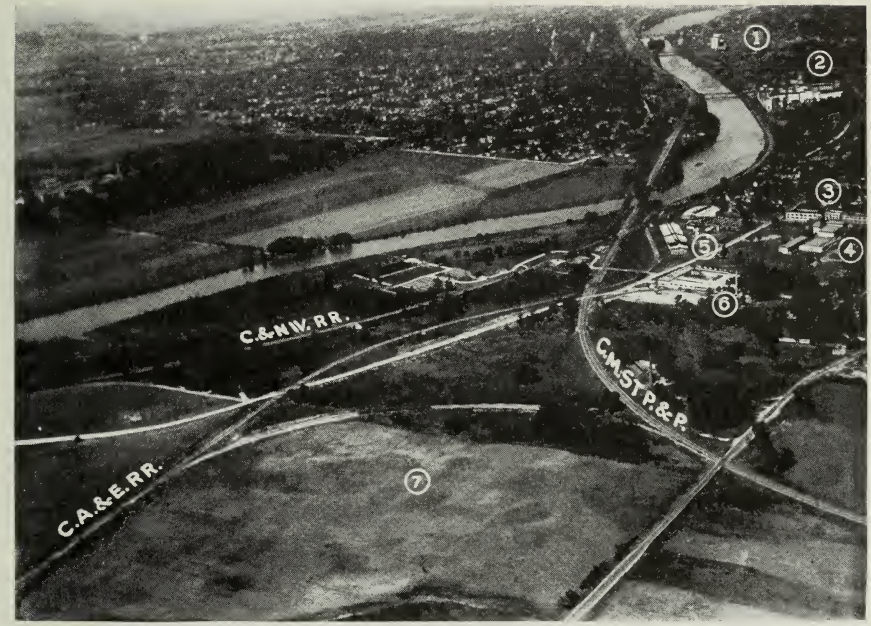
The opportunity for happiness . . . and who in this world does not seek happiness . . . that is the message that ELGIN would bring to you in these pages. There's plenty of romance in this city of charm and beauty on the winding Fox . . . for IN ELGIN PEOPLE REALLY HAVE LEARNED THE ART OF JOYFUL LIVING.

Elgin's Airport.

Concrete road leading to Airport

ELGIN has always kept astride of the times . . . when automobile racing was in its infancy ELGIN had one of the finest automobile dirt racing tracks in the country and each year a grueling race attracted the foremost racers to ELGIN.

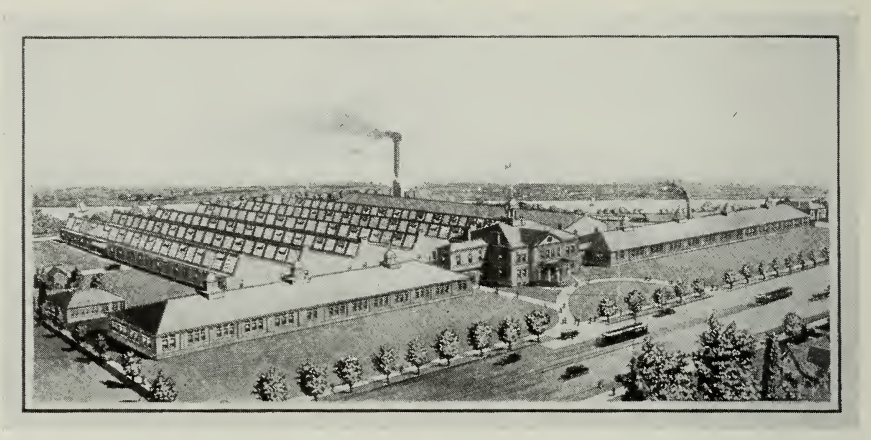
Now it's the airplane and ELGIN again has kept in step with the wheels of modern progress and is indeed proud of its wonderful airport. The illustration on this page will give you a fairly good idea of Elgin's Airport where at all times you will find a number of various types of planes for your inspection.



1. Home Bank Business Center.
2. Elgin National Watch Co.
3. VanSicklen Corporation.
4. Collinbourne Mills.
5. Elgin Butter Tub Co.
6. A. Leath Furniture Factory.
7. The new industrial district of Elgin.

The above airplane view of Elgin's new Industrial District enables you to visualize the wonderful advantages it has to offer manufacturers who are seeking a new location. This Industrial District is close to the heart of Elgin's Business District and located on all the above named railroads.

Gas, power, water, sewer and switch track are all on the property. See pages twenty-two and twenty-three for statistical data of the City of Elgin.



D. C. Cook Publishing Co., Publishers of Church and Sunday School literature.

Illinois Watch Case Company Manufacturers of high grade watch and vanity cases.

The Collingbourne Mills, largest independent thread manufacturers in the U. S. A.

Elgin Stove and Oven Company.

Van Sicklen Corporation manufacturers of high grade auto accessories, cigar lighters and vanity cases.

B. S. Pearsall Butter Company.

STATISTICAL DATA
of Elgin, Ill.

Elgin has an estimated population in 1929 of 37,000 people. It is notable for having no slum districts, and for having one of the highest percentages of home-owners of any city in the country.

Elgin is served by four deep artesian wells, providing pure water in abundance. Its health is further safeguarded by a modern sewage disposal plant of the Imhoff type under the supervision of a Sanitary District.

Elgin's building permits for the past five years have averaged over $2,500,000.00 each year. Its bank deposits in the six local banks have increased in the past five years from $10,600,000.00 to more than $13,500,000.00.

Elgin has between 35 and 40 industrial establishments, making a wide variation of products, and employing between 8,000 and 10,000 people. Its factories are busy the year round, and there are few layoffs or "slump" periods. Wage rates are reasonable, and potential supply of skilled labor far above the average in cities its size.

One-third of the entire population of the United States is within 500 miles of Elgin. It is only one hour's ride from Chicago, the largest distributing center in the country, and therefore offers exceptional opportunities for industrial development.

The Western United Gas and Electric Co. serves Elgin with gas and electricity. The present gas capacity is 17,000,000 cu. ft. per day, and its heating value is 480 B. T. U. per cubic foot. Electric energy is the cheapest in Elgin of anywhere in the country, outside of the cities served by Niagara Falls.

Elgin is situated on four railroads, providing transportation in every direction. It is on the main line of the C. M. St. P. & P., the C. & N. W., the northern terminal of the C. A. & E. (electric) and the E. J. & E., which is the outer belt line, connecting with every railroad entering Chicago. Inter-switching facilities between all roads tend to speed up moving of freight, and in many cases freight can be moved from Elgin to points East and West at a saving of from 24 to 48 hours over the time it takes to move same from Chicago.

Elgin has developed an Industrial District, a picture of which is shown on page 19. This district is located on all railroads above mentioned. Factory sites are available at ex-

ceptionally low rates, and can be obtained in lots of any size desired, from one acre to fifty acres. Gas, power, water, sewer, and switch tracks are on the property, together with transportation for workers to all parts of the city.

Elgin is fortunate in having a complete Industrial Survey just completed, which gives detailed information on all questions of interest to prospective industries seeking location. This will be mailed free of charge to anyone interested, by addressing the Association of Commerce, 14 E. Chicago St., Elgin, Ill.

"EXCHANGE YOUR LOCATION FOR ELGIN WHERE INDUSTRIES GROW."

Photos by B. M. Pease, Elgin, Ill.
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